137 together. Tanala children seem to be rather less active and are certainly less noisy than European children of the same ages. Small children and girls seem to sit about a good deal and usually play at quiet games. The boys are more active and organize themselves into gangs. The activities of these gangs are sometimes directed by old men, but this seems to be a matter of friendship rather than organized control. The gangs are not mischievous and I never heard of children stealing or destroying property deliberately. Fights are rare and are discouraged by the elders.

142 The boys hunt and fish, learn tracking; and also play at war. In the last they choose sides and carry on sham battles under the direction of old men who show them how to use their weapons and keep real fights from developing. In this way they learn how to throw the spear and get an elementary training in scouting and tactics.

146 Children receive no regular instruction and are rarely disciplined. They begin to help their parents at a very early age, although they do not seem to be set regular tasks. From the first they take part in the community life, attending all feasts and ceremonies. By the time they reach puberty they are able to do the work of adults and can assume their places as full members of the community.

Puberty

141 It is very difficult to obtain data on the exact age at which puberty occurs, but the Tanala seem to mature somewhat later than Europeans. The girls' first menses rarely occur before fifteen and sometimes not before seventeen years. Boys mature somewhat earlier. There is no suggestion of puberty rites or observances for either sex.

141 Menstruating women are not considered unclean and can take part in all sacrifices, etc. I could not discover that they were subject to any taboos. Married women usually sleep on the floor, apart from their husbands, at such times, but it does not seem to be obligatory. During menstruation women insert a plug of bark cloth or leaves into the vagina, renewing it from time to time and washing out the blood. There is no interruption in their regular duties.

Children's Houses

143 When the eldest child in a family reaches the age of fifteen or
193 sixteen, even if not physically mature, the father builds a separate house for it to the east of his dwelling. Girls use this as a work room